

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Fort Union National Monument

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: FOUN

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

In 1954, Fort Union National Monument was established by local citizens who remembered an operating Fort Union. The monument stands in testimony to the westward expansion of the United States and to the vision of a growing nation during the mid to late nineteenth century. The mission of the monument is to preserve and protect historical, cultural and natural resources directly and indirectly associated with Fort Union and the Santa Fe Trail and to provide adequate public access and create opportunities for public education, enjoyment and appreciation of said resources. Building on over 50 years of visitor services, the staff envisions a strategy which will carry the park well into the 21st Century. We at Fort Union identified our priorities which will help us to fulfill that vision.

Stewardship

We will preserve the fort ruins, Santa Fe Trail ruins, and cultural landscape, while we maintain and improve facility and infrastructure condition. We will manage well the museum collection and create, build and maintain healthy partnerships which promote stewardship. We will pursue, maintain, and develop relationships with Native American tribes and descendants of those who served or were associated with Fort Union and the Santa Fe Trail so that all American heritage stories are told. We will protect the prairie ecosystem by establishing and implementing a natural resources and an environmental education program.

Environmental leadership

We will focus on building supporting partnerships and educational programs for the goals of stewardship, connections for relevance to national heritage and environmental stewardship.

Recreational experiences

We will expand volunteer programs for resource protection, visitor services and preservation and encourage increased and varied experiences.

Education

We will provide new visitor opportunities for understanding and intellectual connections by improving interpretation, creating environmental education, new exhibits, and by creating and implementing educational outreach programs.

Professional excellence

We will improve our safety program by increasing safety awareness and will identify and mitigate work and environmental hazards. We will strive to improve employee morale by providing improved workspace, improved working conditions and communications and by upgrading park infrastructure. We will build and maintain fruitful relationships with adjacent neighbors and communities for common stewardship goals.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Marie Frias Sauter

Site: FOUN

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Within each program area, project and visitor service, the park staff will ensure that safety is fully incorporated and that each facet will be in compliance with the America with Disabilities Act. The intent is that all visitor services and historic preservation projects will inspire visitors as they learn about the American history and heritage preserved at Fort Union.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

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STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.**

To protect and preserve the old Fort Union is the legislation of the Monument. The park has actively engaged in the Vanishing Treasures and will continue to seek funding necessary to maintain the ruins and Santa Fe Trail ruins in good condition.

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☒ **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

As Fort Union NM does not have a Natural Resources Mgt Specialist, the park must work directly with IMR and WASO program managers. The park has traditionally been viewed as an historical park, whose natural resources were merely secondary. In the last several years, the I&M program has completed inventories, the prior superintendent completed the wildland fire management plan and assistance has been sought to engage the EPMT for exotic plant control.

Current and future efforts include:
addition of a shared NRM position between PECO and FOUN,
inclusion of the Chihuahuan Desert-EPMT group,
a separate membership to the Southern Plains Network

IPM measures do include requested assistance from the EPMT and mowing protocols for the maintenance ground crew.

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☒ **Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.**

The park continues to improve condition of the high-priority assets which yearly projects and cyclical projects and associated funding.

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☒ **Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

Fort Union superintendent is striving to elevate the importance of natural resources management of the park, including requesting additional NRM staff, developing and incorporating environmental and natural resources management components into the Interpretive services program.

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STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

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☒ Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

The park will ensure that all required CR inventories are completed. Funding will be sought on a basis required for appropriately timed surveys.

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STEWARDSHIP

☒ Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Fort Union stories tell varied and interesting chapters of American history. Through Native American government to government consultation, comprehensive interpretive planning, historical research, new exhibits, new living history interpretive programs, the park staff will strive to insure that all applicable stories are told to the visiting public.

Park completed a multi-year NAGRPA process which culminated in a repatriation and reburial in June 2007. The staff is building on this event with new Native American consultations through a new Comprehensive Interpretive Planning process and will continue to engage the affiliated tribes. The park is also creating a new Living History volunteer program of the 1st New Mexico Volunteers which were historically comprised mainly of local native New Mexicans and hispanic descendents. Park also is investigating the Buffalo Soldier stories associated with Fort Union. Fort Union NM plans to participate in the Sesquicentennial Civil War plan which is currently under development

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STEWARDSHIP

☒ Encourage children to be future conservationists.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Park has requested an additional Park Ranger Interpreter 5/7/9 through OFS and Core Operations analysis to provide education and outreach opportunities. The park is in the process of creating a new Jr. Ranger Booklet with WNPA to distribute. Park plans to update bookstore selection. With new Ranger positions the park team plans that young park visitors will become future conservationists for the American cultural and natural heritage.

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Site: FOUN

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Park management team will focus on building support and partnerships within local communities with the goals of stewardship, connection through Fort Union stories to other stories and relevance of the nation and promoting environmental stewardship through education of efforts of Fort Union NM. The park has a General Management Plan request in the SCC process which the park plans to use as a tool in the near future to engage partners stakeholders and the local community in developing the next plan for the park. Park management will work diligently on creating partnerships which may lead into a Friend's group and partnering group to encourage and promote the park and its national legacy. OFS requests for additional park ranger staff to engage the community and visitors in education, communication, outreach, etc has been submitted.

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Site: FOUN

RECREATION

☒ Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

☒ Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

The park is currently creating a new volunteer opportunity known as the 1st New Mexico Volunteers which will feature volunteers in a living history role. The park offers volunteer opportunities to university students, and to the RV set. With an RV pad, the park can host volunteers year round in a variety of program areas.

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Site: FOUN

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Park is interested in providing expanded outdoor opportunities for visitors of all ages in particular children. The park is located in short grass prairie and can offer environmental education opportunities to local school groups which may not exist locally otherwise. Additional park ranger staff will allow the park to include expanded outdoor opportunities for visitors of all ages with a new trail and prairie walk, bird watching, night sky observations, wildlife viewing, etc. The hope is that adding new kinds of experience opportunities at a Fort park will broaden the visitor interest and thus visitorship.

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Site: FOUN

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

Park is interested in provided new opportunities for potential visitors. Such efforts will include expanded outdoor opportunities for visitors of all ages with a new trail and prairie walk, bird watching, night sky observations, wildlife viewing, etc. The hope is that adding new kinds of experience opportunities at a Fort park will broaden the visitor interest and thus visitorship. Connect with local and regional tourism alliances in effort to increase potential visitorship and reach untapped tourism outlets. Additional park ranger staff will augment management efforts regarding tourism, outreach, education, web site maintenance, publications etc. The park is currently expanding the volunteer opportunities by the creation of a living history program, entitled the 1st New Mexico Volunteers which will feature VIPS and staff recreating historic troops at Fort Union. EXpanding Web information with new information will also help increase public interest and opportunities.

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☒ Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

With additional park ranger staff, the park will be able to offer an expanded visitor experience. Currently limited by staff size and experience, the park is working at maximum capacity regarding ranger-facilitated programs. Nonetheless, the park is currently expanding the volunteer opportunities by the creation of a living history program, entitled the 1st New Mexico Volunteers which will feature VIPS and staff recreating historic troops at Fort Union. Additional efforts will include expanded outdoor opportunities for visitors of all ages with a new trail and prairie walk, bird watching, night sky observations, wildlife viewing, etc. The hope is that adding new kinds of experience opportunities at a Fort park will broaden the visitor interest and thus visitorship.

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Site: FOUN

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

Fort Union NM is revising the Jr. Ranger Program booklet to expand out reach to young visitors. The park has also requested in support of our Core Operations an OFS request for an additional GS 5/7/9 Interpretive ranger to build and provide an educational and outreach program.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Park has submitted an OFS Request for an Interpretive 5/7/9 Ranger for outreach and education. The park staff plans to provide more educational opportunities to local schools. With partner organization WNPA, a pending Comprehensive Planning process and potential new museum exhibits, the staff will focus on expanding the outreach and relevance of information and learning opportunities for all ages.

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Site: FOUN

EDUCATION

☒ Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

☒ Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Fort Union NM is revising the Jr. Ranger Program booklet to expand out reach to young visitors. The park has requested through Core Operations and OFS an additional GS 5/7/9 Interpretive ranger to build and provide an educational and outreach program. The park staff also plans to provide more educational opportunities to local schools. With WNPA, a pending Comprehensive Planning process and potential new museum exhibits, the staff will focus on expanding the outreach and relevance of information and learning opportunities. An outcome goal is that each visitor will leave Fort Union NM with an increased understanding of the history, appreciation for the site and the preservation and interpretive efforts, as well as an overall enjoyment of the visit.

Fort Union is also engaging in Native American Government to Government consultation in the interpretive planning process and plans to continue in consultation through each new planning effort.

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Site: FOUN

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ **Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.**

☒ **Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.**

Fort Union NM currently has a highly diverse staff, including spanish descendents, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans, Mexicans and anglo-Americans. As a result, the staff is also multi-lingual. The staff well appreciates the diversity of backgrounds, ethnicity and histories shared among its staff.

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☒ **Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.**

In a effort to provide an atmosphere of work comfort, ease and convenience, the park management team has and will innitiate a variety of system upgrades.

In an effort to improve working conditions park managment is conducting the following upgrades:

- a new HVAC system which will provide AC for the VIsitor Center and administrative offices which it has never had before.
- a phoneline system upgrade within park to upgrade the network, analog capabilities throughout the campus
- with an upgraded phone system which will include selected housing, the managment team will expand the office space into excess housing. Doing so will alleviate overly crowed working conditions, noted in the 1989 GMP, prvide privacy to superisors and the superintendent and give adequate working space to the interpretive staff. Office relocation will also for the first time provide a meeting room.

In an effort to promote employee moral and increase communication, park managment will evaluate the following:

- Upgrade positions which elegible for increases.
- Maintain open communication lines and promote information sharing between supervisors and staff
- Continue award and recognition system.

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Site: FOUN

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park is currently engaged in a Comprehensive Interpretive Planning effort which is also including Native American consultation. The resulting planning products will provide a backbone for the interpretive program as well as inform new and pending planning efforts.

The park will engage in visioning beyond Core Operations, which will give the staff an opportunity to look out into the future, 5,10, 20 or more years and develop a list of goals and dreams which will be used in strategic planning such as a GMP process.

The park has submitted a General Management Plan request through SCC and will use existing and new planning products and documents, such as work from the CIP when the time comes.

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Site: FOUN

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

The FOUN #1 Core Operations goal is to: Provide for and improve our safety program by increasing awareness for visitors and staff through education and training and identifying and mitigating work, safety and environmental hazards. Therefore the park will provide for and improve our safety program by implementing and maintaining an active all employee park safety program.

Park as a team will improve safety for visitors and staff collaboratively. All park staff are members of the park safety committee and will all participate in the program. The park staff will annually sign a staff pledge which commits the staff to building and maintain a safe working environment as well as providing a safe experience for each visitor. The park superintendent will maintain a personal safety plan as well.

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Site: FOUN

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Model what it means to work in partnership.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park would like to initiate a new park Friends Group that would support the park and be enthusiastic about the park, the visitors and the importance of the site within the system. Park will continue with existing partnerships and promote open communication, collaboration in projects and objectives.

Park will seek new partnerships which will benefit both groups and allow for achievement mutual goals.

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